

That from Joseph Stiglitz and Linda Bilmes almost 3 years ago.

One of the biggest causes of our soaring debt and economic insecurity ends up being Pentagon spending. The budget for the Pentagon consumes more than half our discretionary spending. We have seen countless stories of U.S. taxpayer dollars going unaccounted for in Iraq and Afghanistan. We have had countless high-profile hearings on contractor fraud and the lack of oversight at the Department of Defense.

According to the Friends Committee on National Legislation, 39 percent of our income tax dollars last year went to Pentagon spending on past and current wars. And Stiglitz, again, has said that the Iraq war “didn’t just contribute to the severity of the financial crisis . . . it kept us from responding to it effectively. Increased indebtedness meant that the government had far less room to maneuver than it otherwise would have.” So what we have is the U.S. financing war on borrowed money.

We must examine our connection between soaring debt and these two wars, the war in Iraq and war in Afghanistan. Between 2003 and 2008, the U.S. debt increased by almost \$4 trillion. A quarter of that debt is directly attributed to the war in Iraq. The cost of the war in Afghanistan has been over \$455 billion to date, and the deadline for that keeps sliding past 2014.

Now, in the nationalpriorities.org, they talk about a sustainable defense. And one report says that there are options for reducing military spending, saving nearly \$1 trillion over the next decade without adversely impacting U.S. national security interests. So we can have a strong defense, but we’re spending so much money, we’re undermining our ability to be able to provide for the American people here at home. And we have to start taking care of things here at home.

What will we sacrifice? Will we sacrifice the education of our children for these wars? Will we sacrifice Social Security for these wars? Will we sacrifice Medicare or Medicaid for these wars? Will we sacrifice our infrastructure for these wars? Or will we say the war in Iraq was based on lies; let’s bring these troops home? Will we say that Afghanistan is a hopeless, corrupt mess and it’s time to bring our troops home, and then begin to use the resources of our country, those resources that are hard-earned taxpayer dollars, use that money for things here at home? Let’s have that debate as we talk about cutting the budget.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until 2 p.m. today.

Accordingly (at 12 o’clock and 18 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess until 2 p.m.

□ 1400

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker at 2 p.m.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, the Reverend Daniel P. Coughlin, offered the following prayer: Infinite God, You are without beginning or end. We begin each formal session of this law-making Chamber with reflection on Your Holy Word and prayerful petition.

This representative government, Lord, is laden with great expectations and innumerable problems; so in the early hours we seek Your light and inspiration to set priorities and shape proper means to achieve common goals of legislation.

In this information age surrounded by media opinions, kindly lead us to the essential truth on all the issues.

In the evening, before we take our rest, Lord, help each Member find the time for grateful prayer to renew love and loyalty, lest we be consumed by work or become tepid due to debate and criticism. Renew us in our commitments to be faithful both in love and service.

In the beginning and in the end of each passing day, may we draw closer to You now and forever. Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day’s proceedings and announces to the House his approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER. Will the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. YOUNG) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. YOUNG of Indiana led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

NLRB THREATENS VOTERS OF SOUTH CAROLINA

(Mr. WILSON of South Carolina asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, this week I was startled to read in Free Times a brief by Corey Hutchins that the National Labor Relations Board announced plans to sue South Carolina and three other States because voters approved ballot amendments in November.

In South Carolina, more than 85 percent of voters chose “yes” on an

amendment to give employees the constitutional vote by secret ballot on union representation. This threat is an insult to the voters of the Palmetto State, and it is an insult to the sacred right of secret ballot. Sadly, this is an underhanded admission by the administration that union bosses want to evade voters and deny Congress its right to stop Card Check, which has forced unionization of workers.

It’s an admission workers know that today union leaders are more focused on their own personal enrichment with union dues than the rights of workers.

Fortunately, South Carolina is a right-to-work State where workers are protected, new jobs are created, and we respect the votes of all citizens. I commend the efforts of South Carolina Representative Eric Bedingfield and Senate Majority Leader Harvey Peeler for sponsoring the amendment.

In conclusion, God bless our troops, and we will never forget September the 11th in the global war on terrorism.

HONORING PRIVATE FIRST CLASS ZACHARY SALMON

(Mr. YOUNG of Indiana asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. YOUNG of Indiana. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Private First Class Zachary Salmon, an Army Cavalry Scout with the 1st Battalion, 32nd Cavalry Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division. On January 12 of this year, he was killed in action in Kunar province in Afghanistan after insurgents attacked his unit. This past Friday, he was laid to rest in Lawrenceburg, Indiana. Just 21 years old, PFC Salmon enlisted in the Army 3 years ago as a way to provide for his then-newborn son, Noah, whom he adored.

While I never had the honor of meeting him in person, I learned at his wake this past Friday that he exhibited all the best qualities of our men and women in uniform: a patriotic sense of duty, a strong desire to help others, and a keen awareness of his weighty responsibilities as a man in uniform. Known to his friends as “Fish,” he also had a bright sense of humor and a huge heart. In addition to his son, Noah, PFC Salmon leaves behind his mother and father, his stepfather, his brother, and two sisters. We all owe a debt today to PFC Salmon for making the ultimate sacrifice on behalf of our country.

Thank you, PFC Salmon. May God watch over you, little Noah, and the rest of your family.

THE NATIONAL DEBT—NO DEPARTMENT SHOULD BE EXEMPT FROM BELT-TIGHTENING

(Mr. DUNCAN of Tennessee asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)